The University of Chicago

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND MISSION CO-OPERATION STUDIED HISTORICALLY

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY
SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY

1934

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JOHN BARR WEIR

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1. Resume of Methods of Co-operation, 1914-1933.

Co-operation between the United Church of Northern India and the North India and Punjab Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has gone through two, and possibly three, stages during the last twenty years. The first from 1914-1923 may be called the Departmental Committee stage. The Punjab Mission in 1906 divided its work into three main departments —educational, evangelistic, and medical—and elected Indians as members of the Departmental Committees in 1913. The North India Mission adopted the same system in 1917 and included Indians as members in 1919. Such an organization, while a distinct advance over any previous relationship, left much to be desired since the Departmental Committees reported to the Mission concerned where final decisions lay. Indians were not members of the Missions.

That serious defect combined with the growing national consciousness in India to lead to a period of negotiations between the Church and Mission from 1920 to 1923-24. Those negotiations resulted in the Punjab in the Saharanpur Plan, which went into effect April 1, 1924, and in North India in the Cawnpore Plan, which became effective August 1, 1924.

These two plans were essentially the same in principle though they differed in certain details. In each the work of the Mission, and in the Punjab the work of the Home Missions of the Church, was committed to Joint Committees of Indians and missionaries according to the previous departmental divisions. There was also a central or correlating committee in each area. Under the Cawnpore Plan that body was called the Central Finance Committee. That Committee proved to be weak as a correlating agency due to the lack of any real powers for such work. The Saharanpur Plan, however, gave to its Central Committee, the Intermediary Board, powers of review as well as finance. The Joint Committees with the Central Committees reported direct to the India Council of the three Missions in India of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and so to the Board in New York. Membership on these Committees under the Cawnpore Plan was based for missionaries on the right to vote in the Mission, and for the Indians on the positions held under the Joint Committees or on appointment by the

Church. Under the Saharanpur Plan membership was on a representative basis and was divided equally between Indians and missionaries.

The Church Councils elected the Indian members and the Missions the missionary members of the Committees under both plans.

2. Appraisal of Results.

The plans have proved cumbersome in operation, have served to divide the work too much into water-tight compartments, and, while giving certain impetus, especially in the Punjab, to the chief purpose of all this work—the building of the indigenous Church—have not been strong instruments in magnifying the Church and strengthening it in the essential characteristics of self-support and self-propagation.

The chief difficulty, however, in the operation of the plans has been in the determination of policy. This was committed by both plans to the Joint Committees. The Missions, however, after ninety years found it difficult to eschew that central task and the plans proved insufficient to guard the rights of the Joint Committees in that regard. The Punjab Mission refrained from assuming directly any rights in determining policy, but got into trouble through the location of missionaries. This under the Saharanpur Plan was committed to the Mission. Locations, however, inevitably affect policy inasmuch as individuals are necessary to its development. On two occasions the Indians accused the Mission of influencing policy seriously by locating missionaries without consulting the Joint Committees. The North India Mission trespassed in several instances the rights of the Joint Committees in important fields of policy. That this may have been due to the lack of a suitable co-ordinating body, and that it was meant to help rather than to hinder, does not do away with the danger and harm of such infringement of rights. The unfortunate result in both areas was to strengthen the suspicion in the minds of the Indians that the Missions did not really desire full co-operation.

The plans, however, have been a valuable means of bringing the Indian and the American much closer together than before. The Indian has come to see something of what the burden of such a task means, he has gained necessary and valuable experience in administration, and he has learned to appreciate the fact that resources in personnel, finance and property are not limitless and must be conserved with the utmost care. The missionary at the same time has received under distinctly better circumstances than before the advice of the Indian Christian, and he has been helped to scrutinize all his work with the greatest care since Indians have shared immediately in the guid-

ance of the joint enterprise. Through this rather continuous and necessary co-operation in responsibility the Indian and missionary have come to a basis of mutual understanding and real sympathy that is essential to such work. This statement does not ignore the fact that there have been periods when such understanding and sympathy have been seriously endangered, as for example the two years preceding the Pledge of 1930, the period after the Annual Meeting of the North India Mission in 1932, and the spring of 1933 in the Punjab; but it is believed to represent the most reasoned judgment of the majority of those who knew the situation before 1923 and have worked through the experiments of the last nine years.

In spite of all the short-comings and difficulties of the plans, this result in the essential field of human relationships is sufficient in itself to justify the experiments. This is particularly true when it is remembered that they have been carried out during what probably has been the most difficult period in the history of modern India, especially in racial contacts. Feelings generally have been raw in the political world, with the least wind that blows carrying a sting to the over-sensitive wound; and while this has not been so true in the religious world, there has yet been sufficient of it to cause even staunch friends to forget for the moment the need of a cooling salve and the sensitive touch of real understanding. This atmosphere influenced strongly Mission affairs following the war and during the three or four year period of negotiations from 1920 to 1924. Indeed those in the thick of the difficulties at that time said it was either co-operation of some such type or serious, if not fatal, hindrance to the work. In view then of what might have been, the results of these experiments must not be despised.

3. Attitudes of Mind Conditioning Success.

(a) The Will to Co-operate.

The study of the functioning of these plans throughout the nine years of their history has made clear certain important factors in the situation and certain attitudes of mind necessary for the success of any such venture. It is evident, for example, that the first requirement is a sincere determination to co-operate. By this is meant not merely a vocal desire or surface willingness, but a recognition and acceptance of the responsibilities involved in such an undertaking. On the part of the Indians there has never been a question concerning their desire for a voice in the control of work. There has been a question, however, as to how far the Indian leaders, once having obtained that voice, have gone on to lead the Indian Church to assume an increasing share in the heavy responsibilities in personnel and finance that the work entails. While results as tested by statistics seem to indicate

that there has been more of such effort in the Punjab than in the North India area, there yet seems to have been little sustained, strenuous effort in either area on the part of Indian leaders largely to face such responsibilities except in the Thanesar Field. Admitting the poverty and general lack of resources of the Indian Church, there persists the belief that the Indian leaders have failed to measure up in this essential part of any real co-operation.

The Missions, however, have also failed all too often to put their best into co-operation. There seems also to have been a difference in attitude, or willingness to co-operate, in the two areas. Attention has been called to two statements by members of the North India Mission that their Mission was more backward in desiring co-operation than was the Punjab. That such was true seems to be borne out by recent history. Indians were elected members of the Departmental Committees in the Punjab in 1913 and in North India in 1919. The Punjab Mission on missionary initiative adopted in 1917 a careful plan for co-operation, delayed putting it into effect on the advice of the Board and in 1920 again requested permission to put an essential part of the same plan into operation. The North India Mission had an ineffective committee on the subject in 1918, a conference of Indians and missionaries on the subject in 1920, and rejected the results of that conference. Following the Saharanpur Conference in 1921, the North India Mission practically rejected the proposed plan and set up one of its own making. This resulted in a period of non-co-operation with the Allahabad Presbytery which was ended only after a year when the Presbytery had expressed its willingness to co-operate in any plan mutually prepared by all parties, and the Board had suggested that further conference was desirable. The Punjab Mission in the meantime, while not adopting the proposed plan at once, carried out the desired revisions through further joint study. Attention has just been called to the difficulties that arose in both areas in matters of policy.

In more recent developments the North India Mission in its Pledge of 1930 rose to heights never attained by the Punjab Mission. The value of that Pledge, however, has largely been vitiated, first by the delay of the Church in rising to the opportunity offered, and then by the marked change in Mission sentiment in 1932 and 1933. Indeed the general atmosphere in the Mission, judging from recent correspondence, may prove to be unfavourable to the future of any such plan. There seems a very real danger that the next stage in the process in the North India area may resemble the last in the psychological effect on co-operation of a strong, minority group of missionaries who clearly do not favour the latest proposal.

The Punjab Mission in its recent moves seemed in 1932 to be on the way to what theoretically has appeared to many to be the ideal in co-operation—a modified Brazil Plan. The decision made in the autumn of 1932 to work separately was believed to be at the instigation of the Indians. It was accepted with perhaps a little too much enthusiasm by the Mission and was not accompanied immediately by careful steps to conserve the gains of the Saharanpur Plan and build them into a newer and stronger relationship. In a field where such sensitive adjustments must ever be made, this experience, along with many others, goes to show that not merely must the first mile be travelled, but the second and that with dispatch.

In judging the Cawnpore and Saharanpur Plans, therefore, it should not be concluded that the plans, faulty as they were, were alone responsible for whatever of failure there has been; but that the inescapable human factors, both Indian and American, and their failure to rise fully to the possibilities offered, have played no small part in any such failure.

(b) Proper Consideration of Leaders.

Another conclusion that this study suggests is that it is futile to say, as has been said all too often, that little should be done because the mass of Christians knows little or nothing about the matter, and because certain workers prefer to work under a missionary. Such an attitude ignores the fact that the leaders, though they may be few, really make the Church and mould its thought and life. This has ever been true in the development of new movements, and is certainly true in the Indian Church to-day. Even though outbreaks may occur, as at Kasur in 1928, when for a moment the low paid worker is in control, the leaders really are masters of the situation. If an adjustment is necessary between them and the average Indian worker, the adjustment is to be studied and effected rather than a relationship between worker and missionary maintained that is unnatural and often productive of weakness in the system. If a method of control can be devised that will take the missionary out of the employer class and make the Indian and his Church carry that responsibility, a long step will have been taken towards the solution of the difficulties. In any case, however, the leaders must be recognized as the dominant factors in the situation and helped to assume all the heavy responsibilities inherent in that position.

(c) Adjustments in Financial Thinking.

In much the same way it seems apparent, so far as the situation in the two areas under review is concerned, that it is useless now to stress the question of a ratio between Indian and

American contributions as a basis of control, or to point too often to the danger of weakening the Indian Church by over subsidization. The question of ratio was never a part of the Cawnpore Plan, and even mention of it was eliminated from the Saharanpur Plan at the time of the revision in 1928. It seems wise, therefore, that no suggestion has been made of intruding it on the present discussions of new plans. Indeed it seems doubtful if recent subsidizing is any worse, if as bad, as it was for years before the plans were introduced. The Missions were then the chief agents in evangelism, doing work that the Church should have done in so far as it was financially able, and doing it with men under the ecclesiastical control of the Church.

Under the joint systems, the Joint Committees have handled the money and used the personnel. In both cases work that the Church should have had in hand has been done by her members paid by an outside agency. Indians have been subsidized to do the work of the Church. The joint system, however, had this advantage over the Mission system, that it did give the Indians a voice in the management of the work.

There is no desire in saying this to avoid in the slightest the supreme importance of the development of self-support. Everything possible must be done to build the Church in this fundamental element of real life. No plan, no share in management of work, can build the Church until the Church itself is behind that side of the proposition. This task is being attacked more vigorously now than for years and it must be developed no matter what other side of the work suffers along the way. But to try to do this now by talking of it in relation to the control of work is futile. It must be done as a part of the work of the Church, not as a criterian of the success of co-operation, or it will not be done.

In the meantime is it not possible to redirect to some extent the thinking along this line in the American Church? Is it not possible to help those who may be in doubt about American money being handled by the Indian Church, to see that it is possible this may be the surest way in this generation to get the work on a strong basis. To carry on without Indian assistance is unthinkable in these days. Let it be remembered, furthermore, that no plan has as yet been suggested or prepared that does not include the missionary personnel as an essential part of the operating forces. If it is the Church that is to control funds, the Church is understood to include the missionaries; if it is a joint system, again the missionaries are there. If, therefore, it should be the turning over of work and resources to the Church, the missionaries with their influence go with it. Let the Home Church set up such safeguards as it will. Let it make clear that in any future plan adequate provision should be made that no

beneficiary votes on salary matters. Let it demand that all grants-in-aid be checked much more vigorously than before. This might take the form of an emphasis on the "project principle" commended by the Board in the Lakeville Findings. That principle calls for grants "to distinct projects of limited objectives which may be part of some larger program and which in general should be in such terms that they can be completed or definitely advanced within a stated period of time."* Let the Home Church define such matters as it may see fit, but let it not draw back because the Indian Church has a share in control. Rather let that be an added impetus to help as a guarantee that the work will be on the strongest possible basis for the present period.

(d) Recognition of the Historical Background.

This leads to another point which is now generally recognized and which this study has emphasized. The existence of a foreign organization as strong as the Mission from which nationals are excluded is no longer tolerated in India; indeed is harmful to what the Church and Mission are trying to do. Let us remember in this connection the psychology of the whole situation in India. The Indian has struggled for years and is struggling to-day to get into the business of government. For many people in the past and for some even yet this has been for a post in Government service, but to-day it takes the form more generally of desire to control Government itself. And so it has been with the Mission. For years the paternalistic attitude prevailed to such an extent that many new Christians, as well as old, looked to the Mission for support. The Church, created largely be it remembered by the missionary, was a weak organization with few resources and little appeal to those wanting help or to the man with abilities to use. In later years the desire for power in the Christian enterprise has arisen. Some Indians have found an answer to it in purest form, perhaps, in the National Missionary Society, but to the large majority of Indian Christians, it has meant seeking a voice in Mission affairs. Most of the leading Societies at work in India have given such a voice to a greater or less degree. To expect anything else in this day and age is to be blind to the historical conditioning, national and ecclesiastical, that has set the stage for 1934.

4. Present Trends in Developments.

What then can be said of the future. Here one speaks with much trepidation of spirit knowing all the thought that has been put upon the matter by many people, and remembering that as one who has been out of the country for almost two years it is

**The Findings of the Lakeville Conference,* June 20-30, 1931 (Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.), p. 27.

altogether likely that one is out of touch with present trends. The following suggestions are based largely upon reports of recent discussions in India and so may be ventured with some safety.

The historical background and the present-day political and religious thinking would seem to rule out the separation between Church and Mission which is the central feature of the Brazil Plan. Mechanically the Joint Committee systems of the last nine years have proved too cumbersome for further use. What then is to be?

(a) The Round Table Conference Plan in North India.

The Round Table Conferences of the last two years between Church and Mission in the North India area have voted that the work should be carried on for a further period through a joint plan with both the original bodies still in existence. The plan suggested, with a General Board of forty, a smaller Executive Council and a full-time Executive Secretary, is mechanically much more simple and unified than the former plans and to that extent is a gain. But will it really magnify the Church? As a plan it does not seem that it will, though, as has been noted, a conscious effort has been made to bring in the Church so far as is consistent with unity in control. If the Indians and missionaries alike will concentrate on the Church side of the work rather than on the Joint Committees all may be successful. Theoretically a joint plan should provide training and experience and build the Church through the gradual transfer of power to it, so that eventually it may be so concerned over its own work and so complete in itself as to desire to carry on alone. Experience, however, leads one to doubt whether such a joint plan can ever accomplish that purpose.

(b) Church-centric Emphasis.

The Joint Session of the Lahore and Ludhiana Church Councils in October 1933 voted for a Church-centric Plan. What this is to be only time will tell, but is it too much to hope that if such a plan is adopted it will really put the Church in the position of leadership? Care must be taken of course not to swamp the Church with work for which it is hardly prepared, such as the control of large educational and medical institutions. If the Church itself is to take over general charge of work, it would seem that such institutions should be in the hands of boards of directors elected by the Church Courts on nomination by the boards. Perhaps the work of the high schools might be handled through a similar board. Such an arrangement would give the Church Courts ultimate control of such institutions, though in effect the control would be in the hands of the direc-

tors, and at the same time would set free those courts along with the Women's Presbyterials to handle the more direct evangelistic work. The inclusion of the Presbyterials is absolutely essential since it is believed that, both for the welfare of the women's work in the Indian Church and for the maintenance of the support of the work by the women of America, the Indian and American women must have a real voice in the control of all such work.

Or it may be that some such system as that suggested by the Synod of North India in May, 1932, will be adopted. Differing from the Round Table plans in making its first body a joint Presbyterial Conference of all members of the Church Councils and Women's Presbyterials, instead of a board of forty members, it had the merit of basing everything on membership in the Indian Church. Missionaries were to be members of the conference not by virtue of being missionaries, but because they were members of the Indian Church.

(c) Necessity of Avoiding Divided Control.

In any such plan one thing now appears to be recognized by many as essential, viz. there must be sufficient control of missionary personnel and property to avoid the conflicts that arose due to divided control in this matter under the Cawnpore and Saharanpur Plans. The Board in New York stated in the *Lakeville Findings* that so long "as it maintains missionaries in any land" it must have "some field organization" which it "can hold responsible" for such things as trust funds, property, and "the support and pensions of missionaries with any personal and official relations of these missionaries and their families to the Board and its supporters in the home land."* Such a position is reasonable and should be respected by all parties concerned. It is believed, however, that this position can be maintained and still permit whatever agency is set up on the field to control policy, also to control at least the location, transfer and voting on the return of missionaries, and to have such freedom in the use of property as not to hamper proper development of work.

5. The Fundamental Basis for Any Co-operation.

Whatever the plan may be, its effectiveness in building the Church will depend fundamentally upon the human agents who operate it. The Church after all is largely what individuals have made it, and it will be changed and become what the Indians and missionaries want it to be as they work together on the proposition. It must be remembered, as has been said so often, that the Church is not the Church Courts but the local church.

**Lakeville Findings*, p. 25.

The local church and the local situation is the crux of the whole question. What happens in each local unit depends upon the Indians and Americans in each such unit. No plan can reach down and solve each local situation. Indeed in the past one chief trouble seems to have been that we have left the task too much to plans or meetings under the plans, and have not concentrated on the tasks as individuals working together on the local need. Is there any place where friendship and confidence gain a quicker, surer response than in India? If the missionary thinks the Indian is not properly interested in the Mass Movement, for example, let him make him his friend so that as friends they may work it through. The missionary should remember that in many instances because of his background and training, the responsibility for finding a way of working together rests with him, and that no matter how rapidly he may add numbers to the Church, unless he helps the Indian to assume real responsibility he fails indeed. If the Indian, on the other hand, feels that the missionary still tends to retain matters too much in his own hands, let him make him his friend that through the bonds of that relationship proper methods of control may be attained. As strong mutual friends, as members of the same Church, suggestions can be made with assurance of a true reception; those from the missionary escaping the odium of being from an outsider, and those from the Indian that of being from a merely destructive critic looking at a task in which he has no share. Thus and only thus can any true solution be reached of this intricate problem, so far as plans are concerned, of the Church and Mission. The Cawnpore and Saharanpur Plans have brought us along this road. Let us guard their gift and make it the basis of all future discussions of plans and co-operation in work. We shall come to rely, then, not upon any plan, as necessary as such machinery is, but upon the enduring strength of vital friendship producing both unity of purpose and harmony of effort.

555-36. THE SCRIPLIT PRESS, BANGALORE